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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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SUMMARY

During its twenty-eighth session, the Statistical Commission considered five main issues: (a) the work of inter-agency task forces in eight areas, namely, national accounts, industrial and construction statistics, international trade statistics, finance statistics, price statistics, service statistics, environment statistics and the measurement of poverty; (b) demographic, social and migration statistics including preparations for the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme; (c) critical problems in economic statistics; (d) the development of economic classifications; and (e) technical cooperation in statistics. The Commission also held a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of international statistical work within the United Nations system.

The Commission gave specific guidance to each of the task forces on their areas and priorities for work. This included emphasizing the importance of implementing the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA) and requesting a strategy paper defining criteria against which progress could be judged; restating the key role that the regional commissions had to play in promoting and monitoring such implementation; advising on steps to facilitate implementation of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3, in countries; requesting a revision of the United Nations International Recommendations for Construction Statistics; agreeing on the cessation of work at the international level on trying to adjust nationally reported international trade data to improve international comparability; endorsing a plan of action and outline to revise the United Nations International Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions along with a compiler's manual; and deciding that the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3, should not be revised.

The Commission also requested the Task Force on Price Statistics to carry out the fact-finding activities envisaged in its mandate and focus on those aspects of the consumer price index harmonization issue that were manageable within the given time-frame and resources; endorsed the holding of a workshop by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on service statistics in the domestic sector; endorsed the plan to obtain an inventory of available data on trade in services as a first step towards data development in this area; approved a programme of international compilation of environmental indicators from national statistical services based on a core set of indicators; requested the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to consider what further work, if any, should be undertaken in the field of poverty measurement; and asked the that global statistical system be prepared to respond effectively to the requirements for statistics on social issues emerging from the World Summit for Social Development.

In the demographic social and migration fields, the Commission endorsed the continued implementation of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, the revision of the United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration and the completion of the Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics in time for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in June 1996; welcomed the issuance of the second edition of The World's Women: Trends and Statistics for the Fourth World Conference on Women

in September 1995; requested that a draft classification of time-use activities be prepared by the Statistical Division; agreed on the importance of further development of impairment, disability and handicap (IDH) statistics and requested the Statistical Division to prepare a minimum set of IDH statistics-related tabulation items and core tables. The Commission also endorsed the proposed preparations for the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme including the necessary handbooks and training materials and recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a draft resolution on the Programme.

The Commission added an additional topical issue to its agenda entitled "Critical problems in economic statistics". These included problems of the production and dissemination of timely, relevant and accurate economic indicators, their interpretation and use, and the public perception of their accuracy. Dealing with these problems was considered crucial to the continued integrity of statistics and the Commission requested that studies be done by several international organizations and countries.

The Commission endorsed a strategic plan for the development of economic classifications and a specific plan for revision of the provisional Central Product Classification through the work of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics.

After reviewing the situation of technical cooperation in statistics, the Commission requested an analytical report on the overall funding situation, priorities and allocation of funds, and an analysis of the impact of the new agency support cost arrangements at the country level.

For the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of international statistical work in the United Nations system, the Commission heard commemorative statements from Mr. W. Seltzer, former Director of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, and from the current Chairman of the Commission.

The Commission endorsed the proposed work programme and priorities and the proposed medium-term plan perspective of the Statistical Division, and the work on the United Nations Economic and Social Information System (UNESIS), and stressed the importance of completing UNESIS.

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Chapter I

MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Draft resolution

1. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

DRAFT RESOLUTION

2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme*

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 1985/8 of 28 May 1985, in which it requested the Secretary-General to proceed with development of a 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme and recommended that States Members of the United Nations should undertake to carry out population and housing censuses during the period 1985-1994, as well as its earlier resolutions endorsing previous decennial programmes,

Noting with satisfaction the great efforts made by countries to carry out population and housing censuses as part of the 1990 World Population and Housing Census Programme and also the activities of the United Nations and funding agencies in support of national efforts in that regard,

Recognizing the increasing importance of the 2000 round of population and housing censuses for meeting data needs for the follow-up activities to the International Conference on Population and Development, and the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, Fourth World Conference on Women and United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and to other, regional and national meetings,

Stressing that periodic population and housing censuses for a country as a whole and for each administrative area therein are one of the primary sources of data needed for effective development planning and the monitoring of population issues and socio-economic and environmental trends, policies and programmes aimed at the improvement of living standards,

Stressing also that population and housing censuses provide valuable statistics and indicators for assessing the situation of various special population groups, such as those affected by gender issues, children, youth, the elderly, persons with an impairment/disability/handicap and the homeless and migrant population, and changes therein,

1. Urges member States to carry out population and housing censuses during the period 1995-2004, taking into account international and regional recommendations relating to population and housing censuses and giving

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* For the discussion see chap. X.

particular attention to advance planning and timely dissemination of census results to all users;

2. Calls upon member States to continue to provide census results to the United Nations and other appropriate intergovernmental organizations to assist in studies on population, environment and socio-economic development issues and programmes;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to proceed with the development of the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme and to make the necessary preparations with a view to assisting countries in the successful implementation of the Programme.

B. Draft decision

2. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

DRAFT DECISION

Report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-eighth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its twenty-eighth session;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-ninth session of the Commission set out below.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

   Documentation

   Provisional agenda and annotations

   Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the work of the session

   Note by the Secretariat on the state of preparation of documentation for the session

3. Critical problems in economic statistics.

Documentation

To be determined by the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on the basis of views from the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and three countries

4. International economic classifications.

Documentation

Report on economic classifications and the revised Central Product Classification

5. Environment statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Task Force

6. Service statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Task Force

7. Industrial and construction statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Task Force

8. International trade statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Task Force and draft revised concepts and definitions

9. Price statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Task Force

10. National accounts.

Documentation

Report of the Task Force

11. Finance statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Task Force

12. Demographic and social statistics:

(a) 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme;

Documentation

Report and recommendations

(b) Demographic, social and migration statistics;

Documentation

Report and draft recommendations on migration statistics;

(c) Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group

13. Technical cooperation in statistics.

Documentation

To be determined by the Working Group

14. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.

Documentation

Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its eighteenth session (1995)

Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its twenty-ninth (1995) and thirtieth (1996) sessions

Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of statistical data collection activities

15. Programme questions and related matters.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General containing updated information on the work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General on the overall review of the statistical work of international organizations in statistics

Report of the Secretary-General on plans of international organizations in statistics

Draft programme of work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat for the biennium 1998-1999; proposals concerning the medium-term plan for statistics

16. Provisional agenda for the thirtieth session of the Commission.

17. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-ninth session.

C. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

3. The attention of the Council is drawn to the following action taken by the Commission concerning the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination. The Commission:

(a) Decided that the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its eighteenth session should comprise:

(i) Officers of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session, namely, the Chairman, W. McLennan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); the Vice-Chairmen, Zhang Sai (China), C. Jarque (Mexico) and Y. Yurkov (Russian Federation); and the Rapporteur, C. Denell (Sweden);

(ii) Representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission: R. Madden (Australia), B. Molomo (Botswana), S. Schwartzman (Brazil), E. Outrata (Czech Republic), H. Kudo (Japan) and K. Wallman (United States of America);

(b) Decided that if any member of the Working Group could not attend a session, the Chairman of the Working Group would call on a member of the Commission from the same region to act in that member's place as a member of the Working Group;

(c) Endorsed the agenda of the Working Group for its eighteenth session, as proposed by the Working Group at its seventeenth session and amended during the twenty-eighth session of the Commission (see para. 94 below);

(d) Noted that the Working Group would hold its eighteenth session in New York from 14 to 17 November 1995.

4. The attention of the Council is also drawn to the other decisions and recommendations of the Commission (see paras. 12, 16, 19, 24, 30, 33, 38, 46, 48, 52, 56, 58, 61-62, 64-70, 77, 87, 91, 97-98, 101 and 103).

Chapter II

COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL WORK IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

5. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at the 476th meeting on 27 February 1995.

6. Mr. William Seltzer, former Director of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, delivered a commemorative address covering some of the primary issues considered in establishing the Statistical Commission in 1946, the range of issues that the Commission had addressed over the years, and patterns that had emerged in the work of the Commission and of international statistical organizations over the past 50 years, including patterns in substance, regional focus and principal matters of concern.

7. The Chairman of the Commission gave an address focusing on future directions for statistical work at both the national and international levels, which would include emphasis on new types of statistics, regionalization, the strategic use of the revolution in technology, greater user and output orientation, the growing role of the private sector in the statistical field, and the need for establishing an overall policy for statistical development.

Chapter III

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS

8. The Commission considered item 4 of its agenda at the 476th and 477th meetings on 27 and 28 February 1995. It had before it the report of the Task Force on National Accounts (E/CN.3/1995/3). A draft paper proposing an approach to be used by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat and the regional commissions in the implementation of the System of National Accounts, 1993 (1993 SNA) 1/ was presented to the Commission as a background document.

9. The Commission expressed its thanks for the report of the Task Force, submitted to the Commission by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA), in particular the four elements of the support system provided in section II of the report, and took note of the consolidated presentation of ISWGNA activities contained in table 1 of the report. Noting the magnitude of this undertaking and the scarce resources, both human and financial, that were available, the Commission reaffirmed that a high priority must be assigned to the undertaking. For that reason, implementation of the 1993 SNA would continue to require the close attention of the Commission over the coming years.

10. The Commission confirmed that implementation was essentially the responsibility of individual countries and would need to proceed in accordance with their own priorities. In that regard, a need was seen for the less statistically developed countries to concentrate upon the development of basic statistics. The availability of the 1993 SNA in all the official languages of the United Nations and of the relevant manuals and handbooks was essential, as was the provision of technical assistance and training. It was acknowledged that the regional commissions would have to play a key role in the process. It was also noted that each international organization would adopt its own approach to facilitating and supporting national implementation.

11. Concern was expressed by some members, who indicated that the report did not adequately address a number of specific requests made by the Statistical Commission at its special session in April 1994. In particular, some members requested a further elaboration of criteria for measuring progress, assessing needs and comparing them with the availability of resources, so as to establish a strategy with an explicit time-frame for implementation of the 1993 SNA. It was pointed out that the recent series of regional and other workshops and seminars organized by ISWGNA members was helping countries to understand the work involved in implementing the 1993 SNA and thus to formulate their own national plans and strategies, including needs for technical assistance.

Action taken by the Commission

12. The Commission:

(a) Requested ISWGNA to meet the request made by the Statistical Commission at its special session in 1994 for a set of strategy papers to be drawn up on the implementation of the 1993 SNA, defining criteria against which

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1/ Series F, No. 2, Rev.4 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XVII.4).

progress could be judged. 2/ The paper should build on an analysis by the regional commissions of country responses to the agreed check-list of actions needed for implementation. That would enable the regional commissions to define subtargets for different groups of countries, according to their national accounts development. A regional pilot project approach could be used by the regional commissions to respond to the needs of these subregional groups of countries;

(b) Reiterated that the regional commissions had a key role to play in promoting and monitoring implementation and confirmed that implementation was essentially a country responsibility;

(c) Emphasized that implementation of the 1993 SNA demanded paying close attention to the development of basic economic statistics in a systematic manner;

(d) Asked that a full enumeration of manuals and supporting materials, in progress and intended, be given;

(e) Endorsed the programme of further conceptual and practical research recommended by ISWGNA and asked that special attention be given to the needs of the developing countries, including a taking account of the informal sector;

(f) Recommended strengthening the capabilities of the regional commissions, and noted the need for mobilization of bilateral and multilateral resources, at both the global and the regional levels, in recognition of the fact that organizational support for implementation depended critically on the availability of human and financial resources. In particular, the Commission requested the regional commissions to produce a consolidated, country-by-country report of the needs for assistance and financing. In that context, it reiterated the need for training to expand the technical resource base for SNA implementation and for technical assistance. It noted with appreciation the offer of some countries to expand their support for the implementation of the 1993 SNA by providing technical and financial resources;

(g) Reiterated the urgent need to make the 1993 SNA available in all official languages of the United Nations and to complete the programme of handbooks as quickly as possible;

(h) Urged the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to approve the proposal submitted by the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations Secretariat which would allow the regional commissions to help countries in implementing the 1993 SNA.

2/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 9 (E/1994/29), para. 51 (g).

Chapter IV

INDUSTRIAL AND CONSTRUCTION STATISTICS

13. The Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at the 479th meeting on 1 March 1995. It had before it the following documents: the report of the Task Force on Industrial and Construction Statistics (E/CN.3/1995/4) and a background paper on the Task Force's guidelines for interviews with classification and survey methodology experts.

14. The Convener of the Task Force, the representative of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), introduced the report.

15. The Commission noted that some international organizations would not publish data in the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3 (ISIC, Rev.3) 3/ for at least the next two years and full implementation of ISIC, Rev.3, by countries would not take place until some time early in the next century. Until a "critical mass" of countries had converted to ISIC, Rev.3, international reporting would continue to be in ISIC, Rev.2. 4/ It also noted that many user needs, such as demands for statistics on the electronic industry, could be met only by reaggregating statistics classified to ISIC, Rev.3. Currently there were no standard guidelines for such reaggregations, and studies should be made in this respect.

Action taken by the Commission

16. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, with the help of volunteer countries, to draft operational guidelines designed to link time-series expressed in ISIC, Rev.2, with new short-term series expressed in ISIC, Rev.3;

(b) Also requested the Statistical Division to distribute, to all countries concerned, manuals, correspondence tables and other technical materials;

(c) Further requested the Statistical Division to proceed as far as resources permitted in the training of experts based at the regional commissions and in the Statistical Division so as to promote common approaches for the conversion from national and other classifications to ISIC, Rev.3, and requested that a "hot line" to the Statistical Division be created to handle queries relating to the conversion process;

3/ Statistical Papers, Series M. No. 4, Rev.3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XVII.11).

4/ Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 4, Rev.2 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.XVII.8).

(d) Further requested the Statistical Division to proceed with the revision of the International Recommendations for Construction Statistics 5/ by a consultant and an expert group meeting in this field of statistics;

(e) Requested the Task Force to continue its work on the users and uses of industrial statistics;

(f) Also requested the Task Force to prepare a progress report on its work for the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

5/ Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 47 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.68.XVII.11).

Chapter V

INTERNATIONAL TRADE STATISTICS

17. The Commission considered item 6 of its agenda at the 479th meeting on 1 March 1995. It had before it the following documents: the report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics (E/CN.3/1995/5 and Add.1); and two background documents: (a) the report of the meeting of the Task Force held in Luxembourg from 14 to 16 November 1994 and (b) the draft report on international merchandise trade statistics: survey of national reporting practices.

18. The discussion centred on paragraph 8 of document E/CN.3/1995/5, but also included detailed comments on the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3 (SITC, Rev.3) 6/ (document E/CN.3/1995/5/Add.1), the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System 7/ (HS) 96 and the correlation between the two.

Action taken by the Commission

19. The Commission:

(a) Agreed that the Task Force should stop working on trying to adjust national data to improve international comparability, except that it requested the Task Force to continue its efforts to study free on board/cost, insurance, freight (f.o.b/c.i.f.) ratios and the impact on the direction of trade statistics of the general and the special system of trade;

(b) Requested the Task Force:

(i) To send the draft report on country practices to countries;

(ii) To ask them to assess the impact of all those cases where country practice differed from the concepts and definitions, and to ask them the reason for the deviation;

(iii) To provide standardized trade data and the adjustment to procure them at the most detailed level possible;

(c) Endorsed the plan of action and outline for the revision of the United Nations International Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 8/ but:

(i) Considered that the planned time-frame might be too ambitious;

(ii) Recommended extensive involvement of countries including in the production of the first draft;

6/ Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 34, Rev.3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XVII.12).

7/ Customs Cooperation Council, The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (Brussels, Customs Cooperation Council, 1984).

8/ Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 52, Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.XVII.14).

(iii) Considered that the following issues should be taken well into account: harmonization with the 1993 SNA and the 1995 Balance of Payments Manual, 9/ the need for continuity of long-term time-series of international trade, the practical issues of data collection, the identification of partner countries and the work on rules of origin being conducted at the World Trade Organization and World Customs Organization, and the utilization of existing regional machinery for the development and implementation of the concepts and definitions;

(d) Requested that a compiler's manual for international trade statistics be prepared in tandem with the technical guide on concepts and definitions;

(e) Decided that the Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3 6/ should not be revised, or if revised then only in the most minimal form;

(f) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to assess, as fully as possible, the needs of the users of the Commodity Trade Database (Comtrade) before rationalizing the contents of that Database;

(g) Requested that technical information on construction of index numbers of international trade be provided to countries;

(h) Noted that issues relating to the HS and its updating and revision, and correlations between successive versions of the HS, were the responsibility of the World Customs Organization, which had previously informed the Commission that it welcomed representation on statistical concerns;

(i) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, the World Customs Organization and the World Trade Organization to jointly ensure concordance with United Nations conventions and recommendations, and to eliminate inconsistencies, impracticalities and ambiguities.

9/ Washington, D.C., International Monetary Fund, forthcoming.

Chapter VI

FINANCE STATISTICS

20. The Commission considered item 7 of its agenda at the 479th meeting on 1 March 1995. It had before it the report of the Task Force on Finance Statistics (E/CN.3/1995/6). A summary discussion of the second meeting of the Task Force in November 1994 prepared by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was presented to the Commission as a background document.

21. The representative of IMF, as convener of the Task Force, introduced the report of the Task Force.

22. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the report of the Task Force on Finance Statistics. It recognized the importance of finance statistics for economic analysis and policy-making and emphasized the need for consistent standards on monetary and financial statistics that were harmonized with the concepts of the 1993 SNA.

23. With regard to government finance statistics, some members sought, in particular, closer harmonization in the area of cash and accrual accounting. The importance of an appropriate statistical treatment of financial derivatives to meet prudential needs, as well as consistency with the SNA, was also stressed. In this context, the Commission welcomed the IMF's development of a manual on monetary and financial statistics and the revision of its Manual on Government Finance Statistics 10/ and requested that both conceptual and practical issues should be taken into account in elaborating these manuals.

Action taken by the Commission

24. The Commission:

(a) Requested the preparation of a list of items identifying differences between the 1993 SNA and the specialized statistical systems on balance-of-payments, monetary and financial statistics and government finance statistics, including a description of the nature of the differences as a means of harmonizing the links between the systems;

(b) Recommended that the Task Force consider how and under what modalities further work should be conducted and report thereon to the Statistical Commission at its next session.

10/ Washington, D.C., IMF, 1986.

Chapter VII

PRICE STATISTICS

25. The Commission considered agenda item 8 at the 479th and 480th meetings, on 1 March 1995. It had before it the progress report of the Task Force on Price Statistics including the International Comparison Programme (ICP) (E/CN.3/1995/7) and background documents, entitled "Basic terms of reference of the six Task Forces" and "Current status of the International Comparison Programme", prepared by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat. The representative of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), as the convener of the Task Force on Price Statistics, introduced the report of the Task Force.

26. The Commission noted that the Task Force was in the stage of conducting initial studies; a questionnaire was sent out to obtain information from the concerned agencies.

27. Members of the Commission expressed the view that the Task Force should not alter or expand its mandate to include other areas of price statistics. It was stressed that the Task Force should focus on activities determined in its terms of reference relating to the harmonization of consumer price indices (CPI)-related work.

28. The Commission emphasized the importance of the active participation of the regional commissions in the work of the Task Force. The Commission felt that even if the representation of the regional commissions at task force meetings could not be secured, their continued involvement by means of frequent communication, information and documentation exchange, using mail, telephone and electronic media contacts was desirable.

29. The Commission noted that the situation that had brought forth the issue of hiring an independent consultant for the evaluation of the ICP had changed because of improved relations among international organizations. It welcomed the initiative by the World Bank, with the active cooperation of the Statistical Division, the regional commissions and various international agencies, as well as national statistical offices, to expand the ICP coverage. The implementation of regional and global comparisons, based on full-scale and reduced information surveys, for calculating purchasing power parities would meet analytical needs.

Action taken by the Commission

30. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Task Force to carry out the fact-finding activities envisaged in its mandate and focus on those aspects of the CPI harmonization issue that were manageable within the given time-frame and resources;

(b) Encouraged the improvement of alternative communication techniques and the involvement of the regional commissions in the Task Force's activities;

(c) Requested the Task Force to submit a progress report on its work to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its forthcoming session;

(d) Endorsed the coordination among IMF, the World Bank and the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, and agreed that the expert evaluation called for in the report of the Task Force was no longer needed.

Chapter VIII

SERVICE STATISTICS

A. Draft proposal for a workshop on the domestic (within country) service sector in developing countries

31. The Commission considered agenda item 9 at the 480th meeting on 1 March 1995. It had before it the note by the Secretary-General on the draft proposal for a workshop on the domestic (within country) service sector in developing countries (E/CN.3/1995/14).

32. The Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat outlined preparations for organizing, in conjunction with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), a workshop for a selected number of African countries to study the problem of the methodology and collection of data on the service sector in the domestic economy. This would be done with the help of two consultants who would visit countries, outline the dimensions of the problem, and write a report that would be a resource for the workshop. The output of the workshop would be a revised report, providing guidance on implementation to the countries and on follow-up to ECA.

Action taken by the Commission

33. The Commission endorsed the plans of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with ECA, for the organization of a workshop on service statistics in the domestic sector and looked forward to the programme.

B. Task Force on Service Statistics

34. At its 480th meeting on 1 March 1995, the Commission also had before it the report of the Task Force on Service Statistics (E/CN.3/1995/9).

35. The convener of the Task Force, the representative of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), introduced the report.

36. The Task Force had been established by the Statistical Commission at its special session in 1994, and the Commission affirmed the importance of trade in services as an emerging policy concern and of the need to establish a framework for statistics in this area.

37. The Commission also noted that the Task Force had conducted a training course on trade-in-services statistics in Beijing in October 1994.

Action taken by the Commission

38. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the plan of the Task Force to obtain an inventory of available data on trade in services as a first step towards data development in this area;

(b) Sought clarification from the Task Force on the scope and content of the proposed manual on trade in services;

(c) Requested the Task Force to reconsider the need for publishing a yearbook on trade in services;

(d) Requested the Task Force to prepare a progress report on the next steps in its work programme for the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

Chapter IX

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CLASSIFICATIONS

39. At the 475th meeting, on 27 February 1995, the Commission considered agenda item 10. It had before it the following documents: E/CN.3/1995/15 and E/CN.3/1995/16.

A. Expert Group on International Classifications

40. The chairperson of the Expert Group on International Classifications introduced the report of the Expert Group (E/CN.3/1995/16).

41. Representatives commended the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination for its initiative in organizing the Expert Group on International Classifications.

42. Participants generally supported the strategic plan for improving the coordination of future work on classifications proposed by the Expert Group. Some organizations and countries, for example, Australia, offered to have their experts participate in the future work of the Expert Group.

43. The need to develop a network of classifications within which the different classifications would be updated systematically was discussed. This would include core classifications and links among them.

44. Views differed about the priorities to be assigned to work on classifications. Some suggested giving first priority to industry and product as well as employment and occupation classifications, while others mentioned the need to develop other social classifications, as well as classifications of expenditures by purpose.

45. International classifications should be accompanied by correspondence tables and indexes to guide countries in adapting international classifications to their needs.

Action taken by the Commission

46. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the work programme of the Expert Group as outlined in appendix I of the report of the Expert Group;

(b) Urged the Expert Group to utilize existing groups such as the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics in the elaboration of the technical details of the various classifications;

(c) Agreed that the Expert Group's work should be expanded to include social classifications.

B. Voorburg Group on Service Statistics

47. The representative of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics introduced the report of the Voorburg Group, which was contained in the annex to the note by the Secretary-General on international economic classifications (E/CN.3/1995/15).

Action taken by the Commission

48. The Commission:

(a) Expressed its appreciation for the work of the Voorburg Group in recommending revisions to the provisional Central Product Classification (CPC) 11/ for services, and recognized especially the key role of Statistics Canada in that process;

(b) Agreed that the work of the Voorburg Group should continue, that its recommendations for revisions should be incorporated in the new version of the CPC, to be labelled version 1.0, and that mechanisms similar to those used by the World Customs Organization for maintaining its Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) should be set up for maintaining the CPC;

(c) Stressed the desirability of wider participation of countries outside the Voorburg Group in commenting on proposals for revision, as well as the need to not weaken links to the Classification of Products by Activities (CPA) of EUROSTAT;

(d) Recommended that, since the work on the HS and the CPC for services was to be carried out under the direction of different bodies, there should be coordination of the efforts to revise respectively goods and services. Newspapers and the electronic media were given as examples of such ambiguous entities;

(e) Endorsed the need to ensure that the structure of the CPC adequately reflected new technologies (for example, the "technological fusion" of communications and computers), and that there should be "upward compatibility" of future revisions of the CPC, as well as consideration of the effects of classification revisions on the comparability of statistical time-series.

11/ Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 77 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.XVII.7).

Chapter X

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS

A. Vital statistics and civil registration systems, migration and human settlements statistics

49. The Commission considered item 11 of the agenda at the 478th meeting, on 28 February 1995, and at its 482nd meeting, on 3 March 1995. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on demographic, social and migration statistics (E/CN.3/1995/17 and Add.1).

50. Under this item, the Commission considered the progress in implementation of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, and the establishment of the Demographic and Social Statistics Database (DSSD) and the human settlements statistics database. The treatment of refugee statistics in the system of international migration statistics was discussed. The need for revision of the present human settlements questionnaire was stressed. The view was also expressed that information on the national, legal and administrative frameworks for civil registration should be compiled.

51. The Commission commended the work of the Statistical Division and expressed its appreciation to the co-sponsors of the International Programme, particularly the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for its financial support. Several countries offered to provide assistance to the International Programme.

Action taken by the Commission

52. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the continued implementation of the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems, particularly training workshops on civil registration and vital statistics, and efforts aimed at the economies in transition;

(b) Encouraged the further development of demographic, social and human settlement statistics databases and their speedier availability on the Internet and on compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM);

(c) Supported current work on the revision of the United Nations Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, 12/ particularly the review of definitions and treatment of asylum-seekers and refugees;

(d) Endorsed the joint Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat/United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) work leading to the publication of the Compendium of Human Settlement Statistics in time for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in June 1996.

12/ Statistical Papers, Series M, No. 58 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.18).

B. Preparations for the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme

53. At the 478th meeting, on 28 February 1995, the Commission also had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the 1990 and 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programmes (E/CN.3/1995/18).

54. Population and housing censuses put heavy demands on the statistical and administrative resources of a country and require thorough preparations well in advance of the actual census-taking. Concern was expressed at the rising cost of censuses and demands were made for such tools as sampling and other techniques for reducing the costs of future censuses. The need to meet user requirements in planning and producing census products both for the country as a whole and for its subdivisions was emphasized, and the discussion also covered the usefulness of the Geographical Information System (GIS) and PopMap in censuses; the relation of population censuses to other censuses, for example, agricultural censuses; and the need for new manuals, such as a manual on classifications. The regional commissions reported on their planned census activities.

55. At the 482nd meeting, on 3 March 1995, the representative of Ghana introduced a draft resolution (E/CN.3/1995/L.5) entitled "2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme", for consideration by the Commission. Many representatives spoke in support of the draft resolution and endorsed it. The Commission then adopted the draft resolution, as orally amended (see chap. I, sect. A).

Action taken by the Commission

56. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the proposed preparations for the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme;

(b) Approved the preparation and timely dissemination of handbooks on census methods and training materials, and the preparation of the planned workshops;

(c) Endorsed the convening of an expert group on the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme to consider, inter alia, concepts and definitions of families and households, recommendations on housing censuses, and the exploitation of census data, especially those relating to children, gender issues, migration, and impairment, disability and handicap (IDH);

(d) Stressed the importance of undertaking technical cooperation activities in collaboration with the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and national statistical offices;

(e) Emphasized the application of GIS/PopMap techniques and facilities for disseminating provisional census data in an on-line environment.

C. Gender statistics

57. The Commission considered gender statistics under item 11 of its agenda at the 478th meeting, on 28 February 1995. It had before it the report of the

Secretary-General on demographic, social and migration statistics (E/CN.3/1995/17/Add.1), paragraphs 1 to 6.

Action taken by the Commission

58. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the work of the Statistical Division on gender statistics, including the progress made in the preparation of the second edition of The World's Women: Trends and Statistics for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held at Beijing in September 1995, and noted the value of this work for national work as well;

(b) Agreed that the field of statistics on women should encompass comprehensive statistics on women and men, so that "gender statistics" was a more appropriate general title for this field than "statistics on women";

(c) Encouraged the use of the analytical, user-oriented approach found in The World's Women, 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics 13/ in other social fields;

(d) Agreed that its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination should consider preparing a list of gender-related topics of broad national and international interest that might be covered in national publications on a rotating annual basis;

(e) Emphasized the value of time-use statistics for a range of national and international socio-economic statistics, including gender statistics, and requested that a draft classification of time-use activities be prepared by the Statistical Division as a basis for further research and special studies.

D. Impairment, disability and handicap statistics

59. The Commission considered impairment, disability and handicap (IDH) statistics under item 11 of its agenda at the 478th meeting on 28 February 1995. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on demographic, social and migration statistics (E/CN.3/1995/17/Add.1), section II and annex.

60. The Commission agreed on the importance of further development of IDH statistics by the Statistical Division of the United Nations, within the context of improved social and demographic statistics. It also supported the continued collaboration of the Statistical Division and the World Health Organization (WHO) in the work to coordinate census and survey planning with the revision process of the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) of WHO. It noted the conclusions of the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on the Development of Impairment, Disability and Handicap Statistics, and endorsed them with special attention to three broad areas:

(a) Publication of the draft handbook of the Statistical Division on census and survey methods for the development of IDH statistics, taking into consideration the revisions made by the Expert Group;

13/ Social Statistics and Indicators, Series K, No. 8 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.XVII.3).

(b) Continuation of the work of the United Nations Disability Statistics Database (DISTAT);

(c) Development of a standard set of instruments for survey measurement, through the formulation of new common instruments, the testing and evaluation of such new instruments and the setting of standards.

Action taken by the Commission

61. The Commission:

(a) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to prepare a minimum set of IDH tabulation items and core tables;

(b) Requested that the concept of functional limitations be further elaborated upon in the development of IDH statistics;

(c) Agreed that the geographical dimensions of the study of IDH were important to the formulation of policy on disability.

62. The Commission noted, however, that achievement of these items was contingent upon the continued availability of resources for the IDH statistics programme.

Chapter XI

MEASURING AND MONITORING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

63. The Commission considered item 12 of its agenda at the 477th meeting, on 28 February 1995. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the profile of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean (E/CN.3/1995/19);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Central Statistical Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the implications for statistics of the World Summit for Social Development (E/CN.3/1995/20).

The Commission heard an oral report on the work of the Task Force on the Measurement of Poverty made by the representative of the World Bank.

Action taken by the Commission

64. After a wide-ranging discussion covering, inter alia, various approaches to measuring poverty and the difficulty of identifying and recommending international poverty concepts, the Commission:

(a) Decided that the report of the Task Force on the Measurement of Poverty should be considered by the Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its eighteenth session. The Working Group should recommend to the Statistical Commission at its twenty-ninth session what further work, if any, should be undertaken in this field by the international statistical agencies and the Statistical Commission. In preparing its recommendations, the Working Group should take into account the regional experience and results of poverty measurement developed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as set forth in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1995/19), and reflecting a wide diversity of national and regional experiences and circumstances;

(b) Stressed that the global statistical system should welcome and be prepared to respond effectively to the requirements for statistics on social issues emerging from the World Summit for Social Development;

(c) Broadly supported the technical proposals contained in paragraph 9 of the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.3/1995/20) as a basis for further work in this field, and agreed that a small expert group should be convened by the Statistical Division to report to the Commission's Working Group at its eighteenth session on how this work should be continued. If possible, the expert group should meet in conjunction with the Siena Group in June;

(d) Agreed that the expert group should also consider the feasibility of developing appropriate indicators in several specific fields of immediate policy concern;

(e) Pointed out that in many instances the regional and/or geographical content was to be considered when measuring and comparing economic and social development.

65. The United Kingdom initiative relating to the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, led to the advancing of several interesting suggestions. The Commission therefore requested the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination to consider this matter further at its 1995 session.

66. In preparation, the Commission established an Expert Group to draw up a work programme:

(a) Reflecting the major action areas as identified by the Summit;

(b) Indicating where the international statistical work in the social field should be concentrated. Some such priority fields could be poverty, the family, employment, and the status of women in society. The Expert Group should also pay regard to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development 14/ (Cairo, 1994) and the likely outcomes of the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women.

67. In the light of the policy areas identified, the Expert Group should propose specific statistical activities for the period 1996-1998, and assign priorities to these, with regard to the skills and the financial resources likely to be available in international organizations and in countries.

68. The Expert Group should also pay regard to the topics suggested in the report of the United Kingdom.

69. The Commission suggested that the Expert Group should meet in conjunction with the June 1995 meeting of the Siena Group in Norway. The Commission requested the cooperation of the Siena Group in this regard.

70. The Expert Group should be convened by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat. Membership should consist of:

(a) A core comprising the United Kingdom, Australia, Mexico and Sweden;

(b) A very small number of other members appointed by the Chairman of the Statistical Commission and the Director of the Statistical Division.

14/ A/CONF.171/13 and Add.1, chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

Chapter XII

ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

71. The Commission considered environment statistics under item 13 of its agenda at the 480th meeting on 1 March 1995. It had before it the following documents: report of the Task Force on Environment Statistics (E/CN.3/1995/8) and, as background documents, the minutes of the first meeting of the Task Force, the synopsis of programmes and activities in environmental statistics, indicators and accounting, and the report of the fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Advancement of Environment Statistics.

72. The representative of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat, as the convener of the Task Force, introduced the report of the Task Force.

73. The delegate of Sweden presented the results and recommendations of the fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Working Group which, inter alia, included recommendations with regard to the Statistical Division's carrying out an international compilation of environmental indicators and further developing, in collaboration with other international organizations, the concepts and definitions of environmental indicators.

74. The Commission approved the proposal of the Intergovernmental Working Group for an international compilation of environmental indicators, as a concrete step forward in developing harmonized concepts and methods based on actual data collection and availability. The Commission also welcomed the collaboration of the Statistical Division with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat in the development of indicators for sustainable development. The need for further exploration of the links among economic, social and demographic and environmental indicators was stressed in this context.

75. In reference to the report of the Task Force, which was praised as a good inventory of current activities, the Commission also noted that the report did not provide strategic guidance on how to improve coordination and to develop targets and priorities in an integrated work programme.

76. The need for capacity-building and training in all fields of environmental statistics by means of seminars, workshops and country projects was stressed. It was pointed out that these efforts should be based as far as possible on harmonized concepts and methods. The Commission recognized, however, that further methodological work would have to be carried out before such harmonization could be reached.

Action taken by the Commission

77. The Commission:

(a) Approved the proposal by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Advancement of Environment Statistics that the Statistical Division carry out an international compilation of environmental indicators from national statistical services, based on a core set of indicators specified by the Intergovernmental Working Group, and requested the Statistical Division to allocate the necessary resources to this exercise;

(b) Recommended that the Task Force undertake efforts to develop a framework for the various activities, indicating their relative priority and links to the policy agenda of national and international environmental agencies, and providing milestones against which progress could be measured;

(c) Also recommended that national statistical offices and international organizations should make every effort to influence the decisions of ministries and governing bodies of international organizations in order to achieve greater compatibility on international strategies and programmes;

(d) Welcomed collaboration between the Statistical Division and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat on indicators for sustainable development and requested the Secretariat to communicate its full support of this work to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its forthcoming session;

(e) Requested the Task Force to report on progress made in the above areas to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination and to the Statistical Commission at their forthcoming sessions;

(f) Welcomed the offer of the Government of Colombia to host the fifth meeting of the Inter-Governmental Working Group which would, however, require continued support for the participation of developing countries and countries in transition.

Chapter XIII

TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN STATISTICS

78. The Commission considered item 14 of its agenda at the 480th and 481st meetings on 1 and 2 March 1995. It had before it the following documents: the report of the Secretary-General on technical cooperation in statistics (E/CN.3/1995/21); a note by the Secretariat (E/CN.3/1995/22); and a note by the Secretary-General including the report of Statistics Canada on management training and development in Statistics Canada (E/CN.3/1995/23).

79. The representative of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat delivered an oral report on the state of funding for technical cooperation activities in statistics. The representative of UNFPA added additional information on this topic.

80. The Commission noted the changes in the modalities of execution in technical cooperation. Prior to 1992, most of the expenditures in statistics and informatics had been channelled through the United Nations, and the Statistical Division had been the major technical supporting body in this field. One aim of the new agency support cost arrangements was to enhance the national capacity of institutions in developing countries through national execution of projects at the country level. The Commission noted that the overall expenditure, with respect to UNFPA at least, had remained about the same.

81. The Commission noted with regret the lack of participation by UNDP in response to requests by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination for information on funding for technical cooperation in statistics.

82. The Commission expressed concern about how the allocations were being balanced among different fields of statistics, for example, economic and social statistics.

83. The representative of UNFPA discussed how priorities were set by UNFPA in technical cooperation in this area. He also pointed out the difficulty within UNFPA of gathering information on the amount spent by UNFPA on data collection because of the changes in reporting modalities.

84. The Commission noted the important role played by the regional commissions in technical cooperation, and indicated an interest in the role of some subregional organizations. It also noted the effects of the agency support cost arrangements of UNFPA in the Asia and Pacific region as reported by the Committee on Statistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

85. The Commission also noted the importance of bilateral technical cooperation and asked for improved coordination of multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Donor and recipient countries could be asked to supply information, though the Commission realized the difficulty involved in classifying and collecting such information.

86. The Commission discussed the role of management training as an ingredient in technical cooperation, and welcomed the report prepared by Statistics Canada on management training and development in Statistics Canada.

Action taken by the Commission

87. The Commission:

(a) Stressed the importance of technical cooperation programmes with developing countries and countries with economies in transition and expressed serious concern about the diminished resources available to the United Nations for providing technical support in statistics and informatics;

(b) Noted the primacy of national needs in determining the allocation and use of technical assistance resources;

(c) Requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to expand on its oral report and submit an analytical written report to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination. The report would include:

(i) An overall analysis of the funding situation, covering both multilateral and bilateral cooperation;

(ii) An examination of the priorities of the donor agencies, an analysis of how the allocations on different projects were made, changes over time in this pattern, and how the Commission could make its wishes known to the donor agencies;

(iii) An analysis, with the assistance of the regional commissions, of the impact of the new agency support-cost arrangements at the country level;

(d) Noted the problems involved in collecting and analysing the information described above.

Chapter XIV

COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES

88. The Commission considered item 15 of its agenda at the 481st meeting on 2 March 1995. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on coordination of statistical data collection from countries (E/CN.3/1995/13). The representative of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat introduced the report.

89. The Commission endorsed with satisfaction the ongoing work of the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to improve the Inventory of Statistical Data-collection Activities which had been designed as a set of cross-referenced databases.

90. The Commission stressed the importance of electronic access to the Inventory by countries.

Action taken by the Commission

91. The Commission requested the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat to submit the updated version of the Inventory to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its 1995 session, after review by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities.

92. At the 481st meeting on 2 March 1995, the Commission also had before it the report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its seventeenth session (E/CN.3/1995/2), the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its twenty-eighth session (E/CN.3/1995/11) and the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of statistical data collection from countries (E/CN.3/1995/13).

93. The Chairman of the Working Group introduced the report of the Working Group on its seventeenth session. The Chairman of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities introduced the report of the Subcommittee on its twenty-eighth session indicating (a) the range of activities on which the Subcommittee had focused, (b) the resource use that had been involved in the active participation by member organizations in the work of the task forces and (c) the importance of action to strengthen the role of the regional commissions, especially in relation to technical cooperation in statistics. The Commission took note of the reports of the Working Group and the ACC Subcommittee, recognizing that most of the content of the reports had been considered under other agenda items.

Action taken by the Commission

94. The Commission:

(a) Decided that the Working Group at its eighteenth session should comprise:

(i) Officers of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-eighth session:

Chairman: W. McLennan (United Kingdom)

Vice-Chairmen: Zhang Sai (China)
C. Jarque (Mexico)
Y. Yurkov (Russian Federation)

Rapporteur: C. Denell (Sweden)

(ii) Representatives of States members of the Statistical Commission:

R. Madden (Australia)
B. Molomo (Botswana)
S. Schwartzman (Brazil)
E. Outrata (Czech Republic)
H. Kudo (Japan)
K. Wallman (United States)

(b) Decided that if any member of the Working Group could not attend a session, the Chairman of the Working Group would call on a member of the Commission from the same region to act in that member's place as a member of the Working Group;

(c) Endorsed the agenda of the Working Group for its eighteenth session, as proposed by the Working Group at its seventeenth session and amended during the twenty-eighth session of the Commission as follows:

AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMMES AND COORDINATION

1. Implementation of the SNA

2. Work of the inter-agency task forces

3. Environment statistics: core list of indicators

4. Social statistics: follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

5. Economic classifications

6. Role of the regional commissions

7. Rationalization and improvement of reporting to the Statistical Commission

8. Technical cooperation in statistics

9. Statistical support for policy issues at the international level

10. World Statistics Day

11. Critical problems in economic statistics

12. Topics for inclusion in national publications on a rotational basis

(d) Noted that the Working Group would hold its eighteenth session in New York from 14 to 17 November 1995.

Chapter XV

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS AND RELATED MATTERS

95. The Commission considered item 16 of its agenda at the 481st meeting on 2 March 1995. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General containing an overall review of the statistical work of international organizations in statistics (E/CN.3/1995/25);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on plans of international organizations in statistics (E/CN.3/1995/26);

(c) Note by the Secretariat on the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for the biennium 1996-1997 and related information (E/CN.3/1995/CRP.1);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the prototype of a new format of the medium-term plan (A/49/301);

(e) Note by the Secretary-General containing the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on the plans for methodological development of the inter-agency task forces on industrial and construction statistics, international trade statistics, price statistics including the International Comparison Programme, environment statistics, and finance statistics, and of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (E/CN.3/1995/12);

(f) Summary of outputs and activities of the international organizations in selected areas of statistics;

(g) Summary of plans of the international organizations in the area of statistics;

(h) Programmes of international statistical work in the ECE region, 1994/95 and 1995/96: an integrated presentation (CES/830);

(i) Work programme of the Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States of 1995.

Relevant material from the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1992-1993 (A/49/135/Add.1) was made available to the Commission.

96. The Director of the Statistical Division introduced the work programme and related matters.

Action taken by the Commission

97. The Commission welcomed the reports and endorsed the proposed programme of work. The Commission agreed that the Statistical Division should focus especially on the areas of implementation of the SNA; social statistics, particularly in the light of the results of the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development; and environment statistics, tailored to objectives formulated by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

98. The Commission endorsed the work on UNESIS and stressed the importance of its completion. In particular, the Commission encouraged the development of UNESIS which would permit, inter alia, access to Statistical Division data by the regional commissions as well as countries.

Chapter XVI

CRITICAL PROBLEMS IN ECONOMIC STATISTICS

99. The Commission considered item 18 of its agenda at the 476th meeting on 27 February 1995. The item had been added to the agenda by the Commission because of the current importance of the issues involved.

100. Under the item the Commission considered problems in the production and dissemination of timely, relevant and accurate economic indicators, their interpretation and use, and the public perception of their adequacy. These included, inter alia, conceptual problems, operational difficulties in responding to changes in the economy and problems in dealing with the media and governmental officials. Concern was expressed that dealing with these problems was crucial to the continued integrity of statistics. One problem cited was the difficulty of reconciling the exchange rate with the purchasing power parity approach in order to determine world output.

Action taken by the Commission

101. The Commission:

(a) Agreed that the subject was of sufficient importance to merit attention at the next session of the Commission and that relevant reports should be prepared;

(b) Requested that the Statistical Division work with representatives from the United States, the Czech Republic, Australia, India and the International Monetary Fund to systematize the various elements of the discussion, to decide what reports needed to be produced and to commission those reports;

(c) Requested the Statistical Division to report on progress to the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its session in November 1995.

Chapter XVII

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

102. The Commission considered item 17 of its agenda at the 481st meeting on 2 March 1995. It had before it a note by the Secretariat containing the draft provisional agenda for its twenty-ninth session (E/CN.3/1995/L.3), which was amended in the light of suggestions and decisions made by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

Action taken by the Commission

103. The Commission:

(a) Approved the provisional agenda and documentation for the twenty-ninth session (see chap. I, sect. B), subject to final review by the Working Group;

(b) Requested the Working Group to finalize the agenda and documentation at its eighteenth session;

(c) Recommended that its twenty-ninth session be held in New York from 10 to 14 February 1997.

Chapter XVIII

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

104. The Statistical Commission held its twenty-eighth session at United Nations Headquarters from 27 February to 3 March 1995. The Commission held eight meetings (475th to 482nd).

105. The session was opened by the temporary Chairman, Mr. Joseph Olenski (Poland).

106. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations Secretariat addressed the Commission.

B. Attendance

107. The session was attended by 23 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and observers for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. A list of participants is given in annex I.

C. Election of officers

108. At the 475th meeting, on 27 February 1995, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: William McLennan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Vice-Chairmen: Carlos Jarque (Mexico)
Zhang Sai (China)
Y. Yurkov (Russian Federation)

109. At the 477th meeting, on 29 February 1995, the Commission elected Ms. Chris Denell (Sweden) as Rapporteur.

D. Agenda and organization of work

110. At the 475th meeting, on 27 February 1995, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.3/1995/1, with the addition of item 18, as orally amended. The agenda is set out in annex II.

111. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the organization of the work of the session (E/CN.3/1995/L.1), as orally amended.

Chapter XIX

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

112. At the 482nd meeting, on 3 March 1995, the Commission adopted the chapters of the draft report on its twenty-eighth session contained in documents E/CN.3/1995/L.4 and Add.1-10, as amended during the discussion. The remaining chapters of the draft report were circulated in English only and were adopted by the Commission as amended during the discussion.

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

Members

Argentina: Samuel Goldberg

Australia: Richard Madden, Rob Edwards*

Botswana: B. C. Molomo

Brazil: Simon Schwartzman, Lucia Helena Garcia de Oliveira*, Magdalena Sophia Cronemberger de Araujo Goes*, Eduardo Paes Saboia*

China: Zhang Sai, Long Hua*, Feng Nailin*, Zhuang Wenwu*

Czech Republic: Edvard Outrata, Olga Betikova*, Karel Zebrakovsky*

France: Paul Champsaur, Jean-Louis Bodin*, Marie-Helene Amiel**

Germany: Hans Guenther Merk, Waltraud Moore*, Monika Ottemeyer**

Ghana: Oti Boateng, A.W. Al-hassan*

India: S. Sathyam

Jamaica: Roland Booth

Japan: Hiroyasu Kudo, Shuichi Watanabe*, Yasuhiko Nagashima*, Tatsuro Matsue*, Keiko Horie**, Takashi Kanakubo**, Masayuki Sagara**

Mexico: Carlos M. Jarque, Miguel Cervera Flores, Mario Palma Rojo*, Norberto Terrazas*

Morocco: Naima Ghemires, Abdellatif Belkouch*

Pakistan: Mubeen Ahsan

Poland: Josef Olenski, Jolanta Szczerbinska*, Wojciech Ponikiewski**

Russian Federation: Y. Yurkov, A. Zverev, O. Alexeeva*, N. Tokmachev*, E. Nikitina**, A. Klochko**, A. Novikov**

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Sweden: Jan Carling, Chris Denell*

Ukraine: Nikolai I. Borysenko, Y. A. Petrovsky*, Igor V. Goumenny**

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: W. McLennan, J. Pullinger, Fenella Parrot, A. Williams*, A. Grant**, V. Harris**

United States of America: Katherine K. Wallman, Suzann Evinger*, Carol S. Carson**, Hugh T. Dugan**, Thomas Dunlavey**, Pamela Powell-Hill**, Thomas L. Mesenbourg**, Martha Farnsworth Riche**, Robert B. Hartford**

Zambia: David S. Diangamo, Bruce Namakando*

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* Alternate.

** Adviser.

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Italy, Netherlands, Nigeria, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey

United Nations bodies

United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations University, Economic Commission for Africa, Chairman of the Conference of European Statisticians, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Chairman of the ESCAP Committee on Statistics, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations Development Fund for Women, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, secretariat of the International Civil Service Commission

Specialized agencies and World Trade Organization

International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Tourism Organization, World Trade Organization

Intergovernmental organizations

Inter-American Development Bank, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Pan American Health Organization, South Pacific Commission, Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT), World Customs Organization

Non-governmental organizations

Category II: International Statistical Institute

Roster: International Association for Research into Income and Wealth

Annex II

AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of international statistical work in the United Nations system.
4. National accounts.
5. Industrial and construction statistics.
6. International trade statistics.
7. Finance statistics.
8. Price statistics.
9. Service statistics.
10. International economic classifications.
11. Demographic and social statistics.
12. Measuring and monitoring economic and social development.
13. Environment statistics.
14. Technical cooperation in statistics.
15. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.
16. Programme questions and related matters.
17. Provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session of the Commission.
18. Critical problems in economic statistics.
19. Report of the Commission on its twenty-eighth session.

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMISSION AT ITS TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1995/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
E/CN.3/1995/2	15	Report of the Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination on its seventeenth session
E/CN.3/1995/3	4	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on National Accounts
E/CN.3/1995/4	5	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Industrial and Construction Statistics
E/CN.3/1995/5 and Add.1	6	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics; and note by the Secretary-General transmitting three lists of codes and their descriptions, relevant to the proposed revision of SITC, Rev.3
E/CN.3/1995/6	7	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Finance Statistics
E/CN.3/1995/7	8	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the progress report of the Task Force on Price Statistics, including the International Comparison Programme
E/CN.3/1995/8	13	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Environment Statistics
E/CN.3/1995/9	9	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Service Statistics
E/CN.3/1995/11	15	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its twenty-eighth session

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1995/12	16	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on the plans for methodological development of the inter-agency task forces on industrial and construction statistics, international trade statistics, price statistics including the International Comparison Programme, environment statistics, and finance statistics, and of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts
E/CN.3/1995/13	15	Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of statistical data collection from countries
E/CN.3/1995/14	9	Note by the Secretary-General containing the draft proposal for a workshop on the domestic (within country) service sector in developing countries
E/CN.3/1995/15	10	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics
E/CN.3/1995/16	10	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Expert Group on International Classifications
E/CN.3/1995/17 and Add.1	11	Report of the Secretary-General on demographic, social and migration statistics
E/CN.3/1995/18	11	Report of the Secretary-General on the 1990 and 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programmes
E/CN.3/1995/19	12	Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the profile of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean
E/CN.3/1995/20	12	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Central Statistical Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the implications for statistics of the World Summit for Social Development
E/CN.3/1995/21	14	Report of the Secretary-General on technical cooperation in statistics

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.3/1995/22	14	Note by the Secretariat on technical cooperation in statistics
E/CN.3/1995/23	14	Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of Statistics Canada on management training and development in Statistics Canada
E/CN.3/1995/25	16	Report of the Secretary-General on the overall review of the statistical work of international organizations in statistics
E/CN.3/1995/26	16	Report of the Secretary-General on plans of international organizations in statistics
E/CN.3/1995/CRP.1	16	Note by the Secretariat on the proposed programme of work of the Statistical Division for the biennium 1996-1997 and related information
E/CN.3/1995/L.1	2	Organization of the work of the session
E/CN.3/1995/L.2	2	Status of documentation for the session
E/CN.3/1995/L.3	17	Provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session of the Commission
E/CN.3/1995/L.4 and Add.1-10, and Add.11-21*	19	Draft report of the Commission
E/CN.3/1995/L.5	11	Australia, Czech Republic, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Mexico, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zambia: draft resolution
A/49/301	16	Report of the Secretary-General on the prototype of a new format of the medium-term plan
A/49/135/Add.1	16	Relevant material from the report of the Secretary-General on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1992-1993
CES/830	16	Programme of international statistical work in the ECE region, 1994/95 and 1995/96: an integrated presentation

* Add.11-21 were before the Commission in English only.